

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

7 December 2017

Faculty Senate
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls IA 50614

I speak in support of the application of Dr. Melissa Heston, Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, as a candidate for Emeritus status. Her retirement will leave a gap that will be virtually impossible to fill in these times; her role as a teacher and scholar with strong commitments to service at every level of the university is one that few overburdened new faculty are in a position to undertake today. The College of Education will be hard-pressed to find a new go-to colleague who commands the amount of hard-earned understanding Dr. Heston has of how things work, whom to contact about what, and what to do to get things done.

Dr. Heston's most significant scholarly contributions have been developed over the last quarter century in the international community of teacher educators who come together at the American Educational Research Association annual meetings and the biennial meetings of the International Conference on the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices held in Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England. Besides serving for three terms as co-chair of the program for the International Conference on the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices and as co-editor of the peer-reviewed and internationally published *Proceedings* (2004, 2006, 2008), she regularly presented her self-study research and published in the *Proceedings*. Ten peer-reviewed articles, four book chapters, and one widely used co-edited research methods book have made a significant contribution to the professional development of teacher educators and scholars not only from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, but also from the Republic of Ireland, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Brazil, Peru, and South Africa. This is in addition to a variety of articles and book chapters in educational psychology. With an even wider target audience, she has served since 2004 as an Advisory Board Member for the international journal *Studying Teacher Education*, as a contributing reviewer for *The Journal of Natural Inquiry and Reflective Practice* since 2003, for *Brock Education* since 2008, and as an occasional reviewer for *Teaching and Teacher Education*.

The leadership qualities and knowledge Dr. Heston developed on this world stage have had a direct impact on improving scholarly and pedagogical life at UNI. For example, as lead author of the 2005 report, "Recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding the establishment of a *Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*," over the following year she organized 21 sessions for faculty on various teaching and learning topics under the auspices of the Teaching-Learning Consortium. Most notably she directed elementary teacher education through the tumultuous years in which the Price Laboratory School was dismantled, first as Interim Director of Teacher Education (2008-2011) and then as Elementary Teacher Education Coordinator (2011-2013). Her peers have recognized her prowess by electing her time and again to represent them in a large variety of positions throughout her tenure at UNI. Prior to administering Teacher Education, and

following 6 years as representative to the Council on Teacher Education, she was elected as

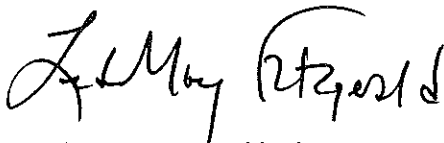
- Chair of the Teacher Education Faculty (1997-2001)
- Representative from the College of Education to the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching Advisory Committee (2002-2008)
- Chair of the Faculty of the Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations (2000-2002)
- Representative from the College of Education to the Faculty Senate (2003-2006)
- College of Education Senator (1996-1999; 2004-2005)
- Representative of the Faculty Senate Chair to the Liberal Arts Core Committee. (2005-2006)
- Representative to the Council on Teacher Education (2006 to present)
- Chair of the Council on Teacher Education (2007-2008)

Beyond this considerable leadership in teacher education, her peers have also selected her as university-wide Chair of the Faculty (2001-2003), as a representative to the United Faculty Central Committee (2002-2003), and as a Faculty Senator (2012-2015). Recognizing the high esteem with which her peers regard her in electing her to such a variety of offices, administrators also appoint her to a range of committees and projects advisory boards and steering committees too numerous to mention. Most recently she has taken on semi-administrative positions in her new department, Curriculum and Instruction, which she joined after stepping down from directing Elementary Teacher Education: Coordinator of the Early Childhood Education Division since 2013 and, overlapping, Assistant Department Head for 2014-2017.

Indirectly, of course, all of these efforts benefit preservice and inservice teachers by improving the way their professors teach and by contributing to the body of scholarly knowledge about teacher education theory and practice. Teaching first in the Educational Psychology and Foundations department, and most recently in the department of Curriculum and Instruction, since 1989 she has directly influenced countless preservice teachers in undergraduate courses and a variety of inservice teachers and other school personnel in graduate courses. Applying her scholarly research in the self-study of teacher education practices to the courses she has taught has enhanced the learning and outcomes of teachers who now carry on what they have learned from her in the classrooms in which they teach, across the state, country and world.

Not only our department and college but the university as a whole and the international teacher education community as well are deeply indebted to Dr. Heston for her unstinting dedication to scholarship, teaching, leadership and service for the improvement of education. She will be sorely missed. But we hope that by granting her Emeritus status we may still be able to call on her when we most need her wise counsel in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda May Fitzgerald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda May Fitzgerald, Ph. D.
Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction